

FEB 26 1968

Feb. 21, 1968

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Stanford Medical Center
Stanford University
Palo Alto, California

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

In the process of writing a book on science writing and criticism, I have acquired several dozen of the columns you have written for The Washington Post. Howard Simons, the assistant managing editor of the Post and an excellent science writer himself, obtained them for me during a recent book-researching trip to Washington. The columns will be extremely useful in the preparation of a chapter on how the scientist interprets himself and his field to the public. Since you are the only Nobel Prize winner writing for a large audience of non-scientists, your comments on that topic would add a great deal to the chapter.

If possible, I would like to arrange a lengthy telephone interview with you as soon as possible. Items for discussion would include:

1. Your personal motivation for wanting to interpret science to the public.
2. A candid assessment of what the professional scientist can do (that the journalist-science writer cannot do) in performing this role.
3. Your opinion on whether or not scientific failures should be discussed in public media such as newspapers, magazines, etc. Would you think it proper for you to do this in your column?
4. Would it be proper to discuss the methods and motivations of a scientist, in terms of a specific piece of work he has done, in the same critical manner in which his work might be dealt with in a presentation at a professional meeting -- or in a close examination by a referee? I am referring to a discussion for a non-scientific audience in newspapers, magazines, etc.

I have already discussed this with Mr. Andreapoulis (spelling?) of the Stanford Medical Center news bureau, and he suggested that I contact you directly.

If you agree, would you drop me a note indicating a good time to call you? My address is Northwestern University, Crown Administration Center, Evanston, Illinois, 60201. (For your information, I am science editor in the Northwestern public relations department, have written original articles on science and science writing for Harvard's Nieman Reports, Scott, Foresman & Co. textbooks as well as various newspapers and magazines, and have talked at length to almost every major science writer in the country to date in connection with this book.)

Sincerely,

William Kirk Stuckey
William Kirk Stuckey